

Hurricane Irma Lessons Learned

Gainesville Fire and Rescue
Emergency Management Team

GENERAL POLICY COMMITTEE
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Continually Improving Hurricane Response

On September 5, 2017 Mayor Poe declared a State of Emergency for the state to prepare for Hurricane Irma. A storm the size of Irma had not impacted Florida in recorded history and the state had not prepared for a storm of this nature in any models or annual hurricane exercises. After the storm, the City performed “after action” analysis to discover its own areas of strength and improvement. This presentation will provide an overview of the After Action Report (AAR).

After Action Report Approach

The AAR benefited from the use of an outside subject matter expert (SME) in disaster, to assist and guide the preparation of the report. This SME reviewed documents, reports, survey responses from residents, and informational sessions with City of Gainesville employees. The themes in this presentation are a reflected of this engagement. The basis upon which we evaluated our performance is the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the National Response Framework.

Gainesville Emergency Management Performance

City employees took great pride in the fact that there were no injuries reported from any city employee during the event. The employees interviewed were also proud of how well the city and county staff, and the residents, all worked together. The SME commented on the undertaking with an overall positive impression of the City's performance: *"The City performed very well during Irma and it should be praised for following up with such a thoughtful look at its performance."*

Irma AAR Themes

Theme	Observation	Lesson Learned
Scheduling Staff	Staff schedules were altered to accommodate storm response.	The scheduling decisions were needed in light of the storm response. In the future, more communication regarding schedule changes will help staff make personal plans.
Internal Communication	Departments worked well together and made great progress through the event. This should be received as a positive and a strength for future events.	Take appropriate steps to ensure department heads relay complete information to managers and frontline staff.
External Communications	External communication was an area that, based on community and employee feedback, the City performed particularly well.	Overall, the city performed well and should look to continue to build upon this area of strength.

Irma AAR Themes

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Sandbag Distribution	Typical distribution of sandbags in previous events did not exceed 5,000. During this event over 25,000 sandbags were distributed.	For future storm events staff will spend additional time planning sandbag distribution in order to disseminate the appropriate number of sandbags and allow for rotation of personnel.
Consistent Terminology	During the interview sessions, staff shared several examples of terminology creating confusion.	NIMS was created to rectify such communication issues. Every city employee should complete the appropriate NIMS training for their area of employment.
City Emergency Operations Plan (CEOP)	The CEOP appears to be comprehensive and detailed for events such as Irma. Some portions should be updated to reflect the lessons of this report.	To improve dissemination of the plan, create an emergency operations “field-guide” to be developed and distributed to all employees.

Irma AAR Themes

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Logistics During Events	The use of the Public Works Administration building as the emergency operations center works on smaller events that may not require a full activation.	However, the layout of the building is not conducive to larger scale events requiring intense collaboration and extended accommodations for staff.
Debris Management	The City has removed more than 92,283 cubic yards from city property and residential right-of-ways; the vast majority of it being tree debris. This took several months to complete.	Thought needs to be given to contracting future debris removal. The resources necessary for the service contracted in this region needs to be considered. If the demand for services exceed the resources, other contractors should be considered.
Shelter Management and Volunteers	Non-assigned personnel were asked to volunteer with the staffing of local shelters.	The topic of emergency shelters needs to be discussed with guidelines established between the City and the County.

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Generators	Generators were adequate except for police headquarters and portions of the Public Works building.	Generators need to be evaluated to assure they are in working condition. Generators need to power the critical components of the EOC.
Finance and Budget	Finance took proactive measures for payroll and purchase orders in advance of the storm.	As a result of the efficiency prior to the storm, the need for a finance person at the EOC did not prove to be necessary. However, Finance should continue to be present during full EOC activations.
Fleet Management	The Dodge Chargers utilized by GPD were found to not be ideal in flood situations.	Prior to future, events reminders will be issued so personnel are aware of the capabilities and limitations of their vehicles.

Irma AAR Themes

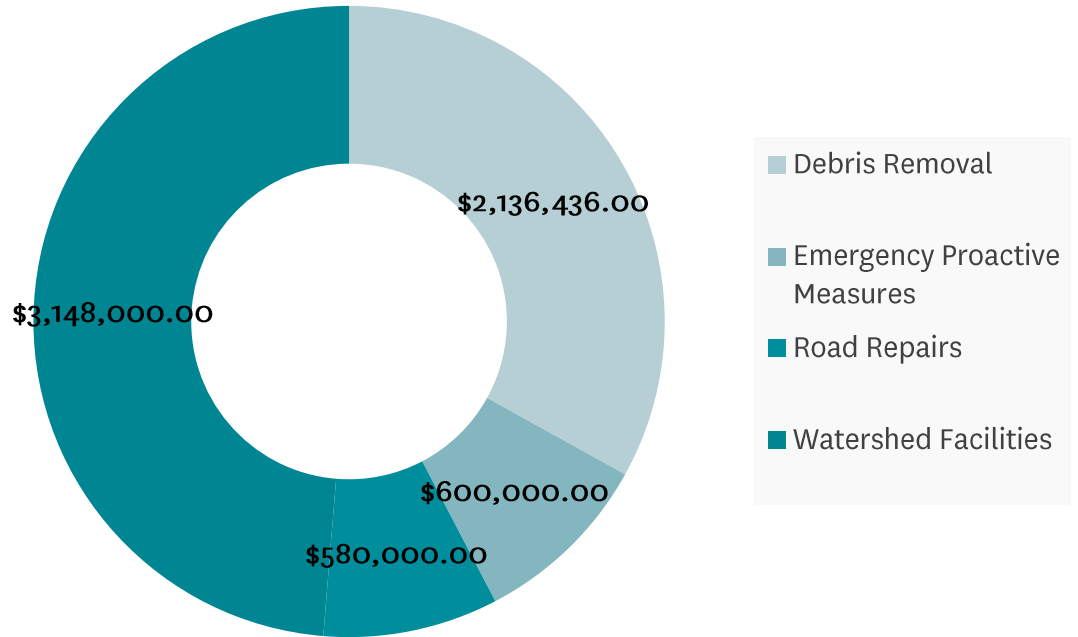
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Use of Task Forces	The task force concept was utilized for the first time during Irma. It consisted of GPD, GFR, Public Works, and GRU. The concept was well received from all parties involved.	In interviews the task force concept was very well received and should be used in the future. There are some areas for improvement to be considered in future deployments.
Management Software and Bandwidth	The software currently being used presented issues. Multiple systems caused duplications. Bandwidth at the EOC also proved to be insufficient.	The City is currently researching options for incident management software. The bandwidth allocation for the City has already been increased for daily operations as well as events.

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Fuel Use and Planning	Although the City had sufficient fuel reserves to handle emergency operations and RTS service, requests from other entities (County, GRU, and private requests) had the potential to deplete those resources.	If the City is going to be expected to supply fuel reserves for other purposes (power plants, personal vehicles, shelters, senior living facilities) this needs to be clearly communicated in advance and made part of the CEOP.

Irma Financial Impact

Debris Removal and Emergency Proactive Measures are costs already expended. Roads and Watersheds are future repair and mitigation projects stemming from the storm that have not yet been expended. Although we anticipate that approximately 85% of these costs will be reimbursed, it may take years to receive the payment. The total is \$6,464,436.



Next Steps

- Continue emergency management coordination activities already in progress
- Conduct disaster/storm response exercise (April 2018)
- Update CEOP based on lessons learned in the AAR

Thank You.